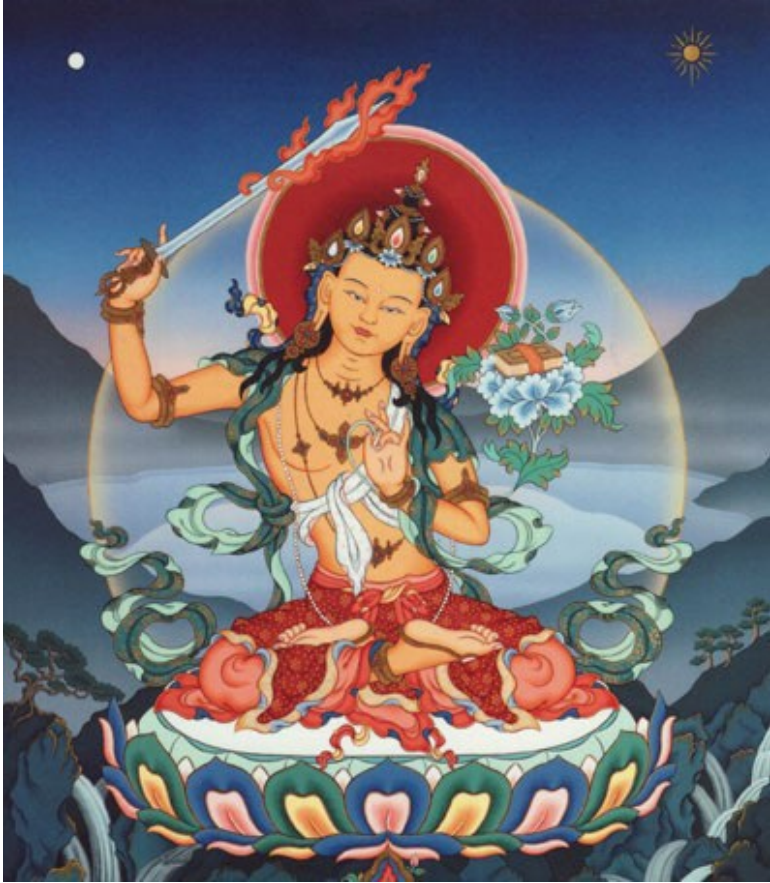


Jonah and the Swordfish and The Dr. Guenther Letters



.....A piece of fiction on the dreamlike nature of reality

....a compilation of letters from Dr. Herbert Guenther, one of the great scholars of Tibetan Buddhism of the 20th Century

Jonah and the Swordfish

and

The Dr. Guenther Letters

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Jonah and the Swordfish was written and published in 1980, a short story incorporating many ideas from Buddhist philosophy such as the dream like nature of reality and the nature of non-dual awareness.

43 years later I decided that the ideas in the book are still relevant to our day and age and might benefit others. So, before you is a reproduction of that book from so long ago.

As for the letters, Dr Herbert V. Guenther was one of the great Western Buddhist scholars, authors, and translators the 20th century. For many years, he was the head of the Department of Far Eastern studies at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada.

I first met Dr. Guenther while a student in the Tibetan Studies Program at the Nyingma Institute in Berkeley, Ca. in 1976. Dr. Guenther was a visiting faculty member at the Institute, under the direction of Ven. Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, an incarnate lama from Tibet.

Years later, I began to correspond with Dr. Guenther in Canada and he was kind enough to answer all my questions. I often requested clarification on a number of Buddhist technical terms and on various topics from Tibetan Buddhism.

Enclosed are 17 unedited letters from 1997 to 2004 from this great teacher . Although he has since passed away, I am still grateful to Dr. Guenther, one of the great original thinkers of the last century, for so kindly sharing his vast knowledge.

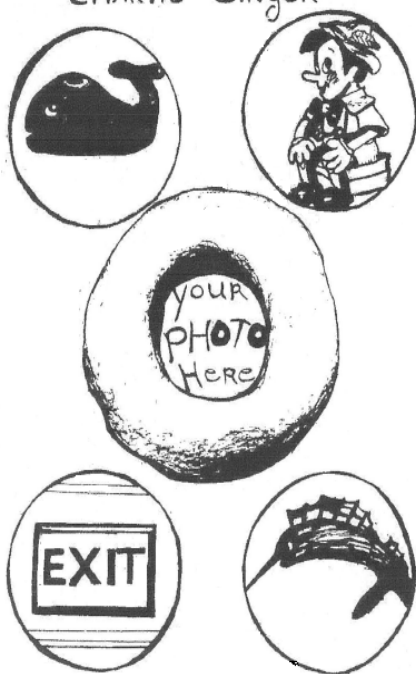
Thanks to Dan Menges and Gene Menges for their assistance in the production of this book.

Charlie Singer. April 2023

Dedicated to the long-life, good health and happiness of
H.H. The Dalai Lama, H.H. Sakya Gongma Trichen
Rinpoche, and their families, as well as my brother and
sister; and in memory of Dr. Herbert Guenther and his
wife Ilse

JONAH AND
the
SWORDFISH

CHARLIE SINGER



Once upon a time, there was an art exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum in New York that was drawing large crowds. People were coming from miles around to see Rodin's statue of the Thinker, which had arrived from France for a month's stay in New York. All went well until one day, a mischievous magician named Marvin arrived at the museum around closing time. He waited until all the people had left, and then making certain that the guards were not watching, he pulled a magic wand from his pants, and pronouncing the proper incantations, he tapped the Thinker on his marble head, and turned the statue into an animate human being with clothes on. With a twinkle in his eye, the magician hurried out the door, leaving the new-born human alone in the room. The Thinker awoke as if from a deep sleep and began to move about, walking into the adjacent hallway.

"Closing time, Mister," said the guard, and ushered him out the door. The Thinker walked down the steps and made his way along the crowded New York sidewalks, still in a daze. It wasn't long before the guards noticed that the statue was missing, but by this time the Thinker was long gone.

The Thinker walked and walked and made his way past a Salvation Army soup kitchen. Attracted to the aroma coming from within, he entered the soup kitchen and joined the others at the table. After dinner he was approached by Sergeant McCloskey of the Salvation Army. "What's your name, son?" asked the sergeant.

"I don't know", replied the Thinker.

"Everybody needs a name," said Sergeant McCloskey. "Open up the good-book and we'll choose you a name."

Pulling the Bible from the shelf, the Sergeant handed it to the Thinker and opened at random,: If there is in fact such a thing as randomness, he opened to the book of Jonah. "Jonah!" said the Sergeant, "your name will be Jonah. Well, what mission has the Good Lord sent you on this time?," he chuckled and patted the stranger on the back. The Sergeant recounted the story of Jonah and the whale. "You know," he added, "Pinocchio was a wooden boy whose nose got longer whenever he told a lie. He was swallowed by a whale too, but everyone would laugh at you if you said your name was Pinocchio," he laughed. "Say, why don't you spend the night here? We've got room in the back and you can have breakfast here in the morning. Then we'll see about getting you a job and a place to live."

The next morning after breakfast, the two men went to the office of unemployment. The unemployment worker offered Jonah a job selling donuts and coffee at the donut stand in the A&P. As for a dwelling, they found Jonah a furnished room in Mrs. Pritchard's boarding house in Greenwich Village and the Sergeant loaned him the money for the first month's rent,

That night Jonah dreamt he was sitting inside a whale with his chin resting on his clenched fist. He

felt very stiff, as if he were made of stone. He sat for what seemed like a long time with his chin resting on his clenched fist, and then suddenly who should appear but a wooden boy who said his name was Pinocchio. "When I don't tell the truth my nose gets bigger", said Pinocchio, "and when I tell the truth it stays the same."

"Then tell me something that is true," said Jonah.

"You and I are inside a whale," said Pinocchio.

Then Jonah awoke from the dream and was startled to find himself in his new bed. "What happened to the whale?" he exclaimed, "Where did Pinocchio go?" Everything was so puzzling. But this was to be his first day on the new job, so hurriedly he washed and dressed and found his way to the A&P. The manager taught Jonah what to do and he began to sell the donuts and coffee. Of the two tables next to the donut counter, the one nearest the wall was favored as the employee's colloc-break table. So when it came time for Jonah's first coffee break, he sat down to join Bud the Butcher at the employee's coffee-break table. Now, Bud the Butcher was in fact a very wise man, but he lacked the drive to be a professional wise-man, so he worked instead as a butcher.

"Hi, I'm Bud the Butcher," said Bud the Butcher, as Jonah sat down beside him.

"My name's Jonah," said Jonah.

"How's it going' today?" asked Bud the Butcher.

"How's what goin' today?" answered Jonah.

"You know," said Bud the Butcher, "your day, your life!"

"Well," said Jonah, "this morning I was in the belly of a whale, but somehow it disappeared and the next thing I knew, I was in my new bed."

"Sounds like you had quite a dream!" said Bud the Butcher.

"What's a dream?" asked Jonah.

"That's what you had," said Bud the Butcher. "You see things and have images, and different things happen to you."

"Is this a dream?" asked Jonah.

"Most people would say not," laughed Bud the Butcher, "but for all intents and purposes, I'd say there's really not much difference between your dream last night about the whale and this dream about a coffee break. For instance, think about where you were yesterday when you think you were awake." Jonah thought about the Salvation Army and Sergeant McCloskey. "Now that's just a series of images in the realm of memory, same as your dream about the whale. The more you think about it, all our memories and even our projections for the future, are all on par with last night's dream. I'd say it was a good idea to mix all your conceptual categories together like dream and waking, past and future, and even history and myth. The more you realize that everything's a dream, everything

will seem a lot lighter and you can just play inside the dream while at the same time you'll begin to appreciate ever increasing dimensions of existence."

Bud the Butcher seemed pleased with his explanation, for he loved to philosophize. Some coffee trickled down his chin and he wiped it off with his American flag handkerchief.

"You mean you really don't know?" asked Bud incredulously. "Say where've you been all your life, anyway?"

"I don't know," said Jonah.

"Why that's the American flag; just a dream symbol, really. You know, originally General Washington wanted a six-pointed star, but Betsy Ross made the first flag and she thought it should have a five-pointed star, so that's the way she made it. As for the national bird, Benjamin Franklin nominated the wild turkey, but the nod went instead to the bald eagle. It was all downhill from then on for the turkeys. They ended up in the turkey concentration camps so they could be fed to people on Thanksgiving Day. Of course, they made out better than some birds anyway. The humans wiped out every great-auk on the planet by hunting them to extinction. Then in 1971, a stuffed auk in its 1821 summer plumage was lucky enough to be auctioned off for \$23,400 at the Sotheby auction in New York. Anyway, that's what happens when you fail to

recognize the dream for what it is. You start thinking there's a solid world out there with definite boundaries between you and things in the dream. ,You figure there's a place called the world made up of independent self-contained objects one of which is you, when in fact all there is is surface-like appearances woven together like a tapestry, just like a dream."

Bud the Butcher looked up at the clock and said, "Looks like I got carried away again. I could talk all day if I had the chance. Time to get back to work."

At five o'clock, the two men finished their work for the day and walked to the bus stop together. They found that they both took the same bus home and boarded together. They sat down across from a woman who sat next to the window and her baby boy who sat on the aisle seat. The baby was barefoot and was looking at his toes and saying "Dada."

"You know," said Bud the Butcher, "da or ta is the demonstrative syllable in every culture in the world except for one in Africa where the children point with their chins. Anyway," he continued "you might say that this is where the split in appearance begins, when we're babies looking at our bodies and the rest of the world. The nature of seeing is such that we assume that there's a stable vantage point on the inside, behind the eyeballs, from which someone, namely the one we learn to refer to as 'me', looks out onto a world outside. In fact, though, there's no such thing as an inside and outside of

seeing. All appearance is on the surface and bears a knowing dimension, but 'happens' in such a way that there's no owner of the appearance! We assume that what we call the object of perception must have an independent perceiver, but this is just a mistaken judgement on the part of an illusory self who in fact never comes into being! Object means 'thrown against' but in fact there's nothing thrown against anything else. Appearance is present, but is present in a way that in no way entails a subject set up against and doing something to, that is, seeing an object. That's the miracle of it all! You see there's really no invisible mind-stuff gazing out at dead and static form-stuff. This is just a mistaken notion based on the belief in the self as an independent perceiver."

Jonah seemed confused so Bud the Butcher continued "The nature of duality and non-duality is hard to understand in relation to what we call visual sensation, but consider the nature of what we call hearing. For instance, think about what we call a sound like the 'beep' of the bus' horn. Automatically we assume that there's a sound that we're hearing with our ears, but if you investigate the nature of this so-called occurrence, where would you begin to cut up this 'beep' into a hearer and something heard? In other words, which part of this 'beep' is 'you hearing' and which part is some unknowing sense data being heard? Just think about it, said Bud the Butcher. Whenever a sound arises, try and find the one who thinks he's having the sensation. Maybe all 'you' are is an illusory proposition claiming to be the

haver of all your experiences, but who in fact disappears when put under investigation. That's been the trouble with all man's thinking in the past he continued. "The self seems like such an unquestionable proposition, that no one ever really bothered to give it the hot-light treatment. But all it really is is a proposition that disappears when you look hard enough," he said and laughed merrily.

"Say, why don't you have dinner at my place tonight?" said Bud the Butcher. "My wife's a great cook and we'd love to have you." Jonah agreed to come and the two men got out at the next stop. Bud the Butcher's wife, Nellie, made fried chicken and green beans for dinner and after dinner they all sat down in front of the TV with a bottle of Rolling Rock beer. Bud the Butcher put on a rerun of the Ted Mack Amateur Hour and after the tap dancing midget quintuplets, a man came onstage and began to twirl many plates on long sticks. "Let me tell you more about the nature of reality," said Bud the Butcher, picking up where he had left off, for there was nothing he enjoyed better than talking about than the nature of reality.

"Reality, reality," said Nellie as if disgusted, "all you ever talk about anymore is reality."

"I wish you would, really," said Jonah, because for some reason, he didn't know why, he loved to think about things and what Bud the Butcher had been telling him all sounded so intriguing.

They watched as the plate twirler ran back and forth to the many plates, spinning them so they would be balanced and not fall to the floor and break. As he finished with one plate, another in a different row would begin to totter and he would run back frantically to spin it and put it back in balance. In this manner he would run back and forth hurriedly until all of the plates were spinning.

"A perfect example of what we were discussing earlier," said Bud the Butcher. "The self is like the plate twirler running to and fro. The plates are our thoughts, experiences, sensations, memories, dreams, reflections, and so forth. In order to maintain the illusion of continuity and identity, the self has to run around frantically to keep things from falling to pieces. We value our sense of continuity and identity so much that we're content to run around like madmen to maintain it at all costs," he laughed.

"But surely," said Jonah, "you can't deny that we have thoughts!"

"Well" said Bud the Butcher, "thoughts are funny things. Everyone pays attention to the contents of their thoughts but it's about time people considered the dynamics of what we call having thoughts. It's like there's this 'blip' going on, some kind of message, and it comes on as if it's a message from you and to you and oftentimes about you. Say let's see what's on the other channel."

Bud the Butcher turned to a comedy show. A stranger was visiting a small town and walked into

the sheriff's office. "Where's the sheriff?" asked the stranger. "I'm the sheriff," said the man in the office as he put on the sheriff's hat. After a while the stranger said, "I'm trying to find the justice of the peace."

The sheriff took off his sheriff's hat and putting on a derby that was sitting on the table said, "That's me!"

"Say, how about that!" said Bud the Butcher. "Just what I was saying. First you put on the hat of the sender of this thought and then at the same time you're turning round and putting on the hat of the receiver. It's something we need to begin to be suspicious about. It may just be a momentary 'blip' or presentation without any foundation or owner. Thoughts presents themselves as if they belong to someone, namely the one called you but ultimately, there's nobody there! The mind is always so stirred up from running around, I like to set aside a little time every day to just sit there and let whatever thoughts want to, come up and just notice them all and how they come up, and then let them go, without fixating or holding on to them. Just watch the talk and the reactions to what's essentially just chatter having no owner behind it. After a while, the mind which is really nothing other than what we call mental events, gets real settled and some kind of clarity develops. You should try it, Jonah."

"I will," said Jonah, and rested his chin on his closed fist. He sat in this position for some time and then turned to Bud the Butcher and said, "But what about

my body? Surely you can't deny that this is me over here and that's you over there!"

"Well," answered Bud the Butcher," conventionally speaking that might be hard to deny. But at a deeper level, when you talk like that you're really just cutting up the space or the dream from a unified field into a collection of things having separate and distinct identities. I mean boundary or division is a funny thing. We assume that we're a bag of skin and that we end at our eyeballs and think that what we think we're seeing is outside of us. That reminds me of a little story:

"A pigeon was flying above the rooftops in a small town. He was approached by another pigeon whose face was all covered with soot from flying over the chimneys spouting smoke. The clean pigeon couldn't see his own face but assumed that it too must be dirty, and swooped down to wash his face in the river."

"In the same way, we find ourselves in a situation called 'being among people in a place' and mistaking the presence before us as another thing called 'a person out there that we're looking at,' we assume we must be a similar thing with a face and eyeballs and bounded by skin and act as if we're an isolated object among a collection of isolated objects called 'people.' That's where the metaphor of dream comes in handy. When you awake from a dream you realize that in a dream it's like you're not just a thing among other isolated things but you are that whole dream-space. If you cut the space up

into a collection of separate things with what you think is you on the inside looking out, eventually you end up with imaginary blue-eyed lookers called Nazis who think they're looking at things called Jewish children behind barbed-wire."

"Originally, you know," continued Bud the Butcher, "appearance is just like light of different colors, with no separation or boundaries between an imaginary viewer and what's referred to as 'what he's viewing.' Through the confusion of not understanding presence for what it is, we cut up appearance into a collection of isolated entities, with all knowing being attributed to people who are endowed with properties of sensing, while the rest of the world is regarded as inanimate and unknowing.

"That reminds me of the myth of Lucifer. Lucifer, who was the most beautiful and intelligent of all the angels, means 'light bearer.' The way I understand it, Lucifer refers not to an individual, but to a state of mind in which the light of appearance remains in a state of openness and lucency, with no distinction between inside and outside, subject and object, or knower and known. Through habituation of mistaking appearance for what it is not, the light of vision is dimmed and dulled and we cut up the world into a collection of spread out objects in a place called the world, with ourselves as just another object. This is the fall of Lucifer from a state of grace, and the fall of man into the world of duality, the fall into belief in self and other, who and where, and all dualities as being independent categories of experience in opposition to each other and in need

of reconciliation." Bud the Butcher seemed pleased with his lucid explanation.

"How can I begin to see more clearly?" asked Jonah.

Bud the Butcher thought for a moment and said, "Lit-up windows at night."

"Huh?" replied Jonah with a look of bewilderment.

"I think it would help if you began paying special attention to lit-up windows at night. Begin to treat them as just a patch of color in a field with no distinct separation between them and the rest of the field of vision, and begin to develop a feeling that maybe there's no distance or gap between what you think is you or your seeing capacity located somewhere, and what you regard as your object of vision. Don't try and analyze it intellectually but just walk along and pay attention to the quality of vision in regarding lit-up windows at night. While you're at work, cans of food on the shelf at the A & P are also good to develop seeing properly. Regard them as pure light, just patches of color, with no distinction between where you end and the can begins. If you walk towards a can, don't regard the changing appearances as belonging to one 'thing' but rather as ever-changing facets of surface-like appearance. Fact is, you never really get closer to an 'it' because there's no 'it' to be cut off from, and you might even begin to develop the feeling that movement towards what people refer to as 'the thing before me' isn't even taking place! Maybe you'll even develop the feeling that you are that appearance which ends up

being labeled by other people as 'the can that I see!'"

Jonah looked very puzzled.

"Just practice," said Bud the Butcher, "you'll see what I mean."

"Well, thanks," said Jonah. "I'd better be going now. Thanks for the dinner, Nellie."

"Don't mention it, Jonah," said Nellie, "and do come over again sometime."

"Thanks, I will," said Jonah, and he walked out the door he paid special attention to the lit-up windows as he walked back to Mrs. Pritchard's boarding house. There did seem to be something special, even magical, to the way lit-up windows stood out from the rest of his field of vision. Jonah decided that he would make a special effort to understand what Bud the Butcher had been talking about, and to cultivate his ability to see properly.

That night Jonah again dreamt that he was inside the whale's belly with Pinocchio. He was seated with his chin resting on his clenched fist. Pinocchio said, "When I tell a lie, my nose grows. When I tell the truth, it stays the same."

"Then tell me something that is true," said Jonah.

"I am looking at my nose," said Pinocchio, and much to his surprise and Jonah's, his nose grew three inches. "How peculiar!" said Pinocchio.

Then a voice was heard coming from a loudspeaker in a corner of the whale's belly. "This is the voice of the swordfish," said the voice. "If you wish to get out of the whale, remember this:

The whale is the world, the seer's you.

The seer and the seen, these are not-two."

Then Jonah awoke from his dream and wrote it all down so he could tell Bud the Butcher about it, and then hurried to get dressed and washed so he could catch the bus to the A & P. When it came time for his coffee break, Jonah joined Bud the Butcher at the table favored as the employee's coffee break table and proceeded to tell him about his dream.

"What an interesting dream," said Bud the Butcher. "I wonder what the swordfish means, though. Keep paying attention to your dreams and I'm sure it will become evident."

"I will " said Jonah, and he went back behind the counter to sell the donuts and coffee. He paid special attention to the shelves of canned goods in the manner that Bud the Butcher had instructed.

At the next coffee break, Jonah sat down again with Bud the Butcher. "I've been trying to see the cans of food in the way we've been talking about," he said, "but I can't help but try and analyze the situation intellectually and logically. How can I be seeing the cans if there's no 'me' to see it and no 'it' outside me?"

"That's the whole point," said Bud the Butcher.

"Seeing isn't taking place! Seeing is a proposition that entails a subject doing something actively to an object. But when investigated carefully, these propositions of agent or seer, action or seeing, and acted upon or seen, don't refer to anything that you can pin down. For instance, if there was such thing as seeing going on, this activity would have a beginning, right?"

"I guess so," said Jonah.

"Well," continued Bud the Butcher, 'then seeing couldn't begin where it hasn't begun yet, right?"

"I guess not," said Jonah.

"And it couldn't begin where it's already begun, right?"

"I guess not," answered Jonah.

"Well, all you ever have is a case of an activity which hasn't begun yet or has already begun, but seeing wouldn't have anywhere to begin in either case!"

"I don't follow you," said Jonah.

"Well," said Bud the Butcher, that is sort of a tough argument to make sense of. But let's try a different approach, If seeing is in fact taking place, you have to have a seer, right?"

"That makes sense," said Jonah.

"Well, if the seer sees, he must already be seeing or we couldn't call him the seer, right?"

"I guess not," said Jonah.

"Well if he's already seeing and we add that this seer sees, then that would be adding on a second activity to him and he'd be an agent with a double action, and that would be impossible!" Bud the Butcher laughed uproariously.

"Let me tell you a story that will make that point clearer," said Bud the Butcher, for he loved to tell stories.

"Once upon a time, there lived an old couple in a small house in a little village. Every morning before going off to work, the man would go out and buy a pound of butter and put it in their refrigerator. When he returned, he wanted some butter to put on his bread but when he looked in the refrigerator, it was gone. 'Where's the butter?' he asked his wife. 'The cat ate it', said the old woman, pointing to the cat. But the fact was that the old woman so loved to eat butter that in the course of the day she would eat the entire pound of butter! The same thing happened the next day: the old man returned from work, and asked for the butter for his bread but the wife replied, 'The cat ate it.' This happened day after day for a week and the old man began to suspect that it was not the cat but his wife who was eating up the butter. The next day when he asked for the butter and his wife said 'The cat ate it,' the old man said, 'Well, let's try an experiment. The butter weighs one pound. We'll weigh the cat on the

bathroom scale tomorrow night, and if the cat ate the butter, he should be a pound heavier. They weighed the cat on the bathroom scale and he weighed exactly one pound. The next night when the old man returned from work he asked for the butter and was of course told, 'The cat ate it.' 'Well, let's weigh him then,' said the old man. 'He weighed one pound last night, so tonight he should weigh two.' So he took out the bathroom scale and placed the cat upon it. The cat still weighed exactly one pound. "Well, said the old man pointing to the cat, here is the butter - now where is the cat?"

Bud the Butcher laughed and laughed but Jonah could only manage a smile and waited for Bud the Butcher to explain how his story fit the case he was trying to explain. "You see," said Bud the Butcher when he had finished laughing, 'the one who sees, but then you can't add that 'the one who sees sees' because that would be redundant. That is to say, you use up the activity to establish the agent, but you can't have both at the same time. Fact is that seer and sees are just propositions and they depend on each other for being what they claim to be, but if you look into them hard enough, you'll find they never came into being as independent meanings.

"That's what's so miraculous about appearance. There's appearance but it 'happens' in a way that nothing really 'happens' or takes place. Appearance just is, and comes into being without in agent or an activity taking place. If you investigate appearance

long enough and carefully enough, you'll find this to be the case.

"You really have to pay attention to the nature of propositions," continued Bud the Butcher. "Notice how all things and activities are really propositions whose meanings tend to refer to other meanings in order to mean that thing. Know what I mean? I don't mean to be mean," and he roared with laughter. "Anyway," he went on, "the world is just a bunch of empty meanings. Me, you, seeing, hearing, thoughts and thinkers, the world outside, here, there, distance and nearness, doing, not doing; everything's a meaning depending on other meanings but they all disappear when you look hard enough. Think about it," said Bud the Butcher, and put on his paper hat to go back to work in the meat department.

Jonah went back to work at the donut counter and thought about what Bud the Butcher had been saying. He puzzled over the matter for days and days. Then one day he was walking down the steps to go to the bathroom. The thought arose, "I'm walking down the steps." All of a sudden something clicked and he began to laugh and laugh. In trying to reconstruct what had happened, Jonah told Bud the Butcher that he had been thinking about what he had said about the nature of the sayer and hearer of thoughts and about the nature of meanings. "I realized that rather than being the case that I was creating the thought, the thought 'I'm walking down the steps' was actually creating me! The talk comes on as if it's being said by

someone claiming to be the 'me having the thought,' but I finally realized there's really no one there! It's just talk pretending to be a 'somebody who's having a thought!' It's like the dream cuts itself into separate units of meaning including 'me and 'steps' and tries to get this 'me' to be the spokesman for it but this time I wouldn't fall for it!"

"That really is an important realization, Jonah," said Bud the Butcher, and patted him on the back.

"Sounds like you really hit the jackpot! It is possible to get some kind of realization, but the funny thing is, the realization doesn't even belong to anyone!" and he laughed and laughed.

Then Bud the Butcher and Jonah went back to work. After work Bud the Butcher came up to the donut counter and said, "Say Jonah, how'd you like to go to the movies tonight? They're showing No Exit at the Bleecker."

"Sure," said Jonah.

Then they grabbed a bite at the A&P deli and walked to the Bleecker St. Cinema to see the film No Exit. During the film, Bud the Butcher turned to Jonah and said, "Notice the exit signs from time to time," and Jonah did so.

As they were walking home after the film, Jonah asked Bud the Butcher, "What's so special about exit signs?"

"Well," answered Bud the Butcher, "they're sort of a special cipher of transcendence. One day I'm going

to write a book called Nose Exit. If there's really no isolated self looking out from behind the eyeballs onto a world outside, then it's really no farther to what you label 'your nose' than it is to the exit sign because there's no from to be farther from! Once this is realized, there's no place for anyone to get out of or even to get to, because there's really no one located anywhere! It's just a matter of proposition creating 'you' and 'the world' from situation to situation, and stringing you along as the central character in a stupendous piece of fiction!" and he laughed til he turned red.

They passed a group of people standing on the corner waiting for the bus which was approaching from two blocks away. Then Bud the Butcher continued, "It's like you mistake the surface-like patch of color you're in no way cut off from as a thing out there called a bus, then consider that the patch of color is getting closer, but you're really never cut off from an 'it' for the 'it' to be getting closer. Then you decide that the series of surface-like patches of color has an inside. You're created as a meaning or reborn really with the thought 'I'm' going inside the bus', where you're presented with more appearances that are on the surface, and you connect the surface like appearances called 'the inside and outside' as belonging to one 'thing' but the 'thing' never really comes into being as an independent object with an inside and an outside of its own."

They continued walking and passed Norman the Village idiot who was known to be hard of touching

in the same way that some people are hard of hearing. He was pointing up at the sky and shouting "Full moon for sale!"

"Hi, Norman," said Bud the Butcher, for he knew all of the interesting people in the village. "What are you doing?"

"I've managed to catch the moon between my fingers," he said. "See?"

"So you have," said Bud the Butcher. "I sure hope you can sell it," and the A & P workers continued on their way. "They may call him the Village idiot but he has a better idea of what's really going on than most people. There's a sense in which the moon really is just an apparition we can put between our fingers! We assume there must be an external object that we can get closer to by rocket ship and touch, but the series of surface-like presentations of appearance doesn't belong to one thing that we're cut off from ultimately at first sight' or at subsequent 'sightings.' In fact there isn't even an inch of space between what we imagine to be us or our seeing capacity we believe to be located somewhere called 'here' and that white patch of color we regard as being a quarter-million miles our 'there'! What's referred to as 'the moon that I see' and what you call 'the moon that I see' don't really refer to or belong to 'one same moon' that can be said to 'exist'. We need to re-examine what we mean when we say that 'a thing exists.'

"Our culture is very scientific but people don't realize that science is just another system of

mythology or dream interpretation, really. Instead of gods and goddesses, scientific mythology uses atoms and molecules to explain things. But talking about atoms is really just a way of looking at things from a certain angle. Appearances just are and there's a knowing dimension to them but it really isn't a case of some kind of invisible mind-stuff doing something like 'knowing' the visible objects made of matter. Mind and matter is just part of a very convincing propositional framework. Looking through an electron microscope doesn't prove that atoms 'exist'. If it means anything, it just means that an imaginary entity called a self thinks he's doing something called looking, by means of his invisible mind, at what he thinks are building blocks of what he thinks is an external object. 'Personally', said Bud the Butcher, " I think people were probably better off when they believed in gods and goddesses who personified different aspects of existence. Their lives were probably more meaningful. I don't mean some one God or original mind or intelligence who sometime in the distant past formed matter out of nothing. That too is just part of a convincing propositional framework that prevents us from dealing directly with what we actually have at hand. Even the idea of time as something beginning at a particular point, the beginning, and continuing in a smooth line made up of equidistant time units is something we need to be wary of, but time's something I don't understand well enough to talk about, except to say that it all centers around a self experiencing it, and if we undermine the belief in a solid self, then time as it's

commonly understood really has nothing to stand on. Well, time to say 'goodnight'," chuckled Bud the Butcher, and walked up the stairs to his apartment.

"Goodnight, Bud," said Jonah, and made his way back to Mrs. Pritchard's boarding house. He seemed pleased that he was making progress in understanding the world better, and fell into a peaceful slumber. Towards morning, he again dreamt that he was in the whale's belly with Pinocchio. Pinocchio said, 'When I lie, my nose grows. When I tell the truth it stays the same.'

"Then tell me something that is true," said Jonah.

"You and I are inside a whale," said Pinocchio, and much to his surprise, his nose grew three more inches.

"This is the voice of the swordfish," came a voice over the loudspeaker in the corner of the whale's belly.

"The whale is the world, the seer's the you.

The seer and the seen, these are not two," said the voice, just its it had in his previous dream about the whale. "If you wish to get out of the whale forever, you may require the help of my secret mantra. With it, you will penetrate to an understanding of all things. Behold the writing on the wall!"

Then the letters began to appear magically on the belly of the whale until they spelled out:

OM AH RA PA TSA NA DHI

Jonah repeated the magic formula, "Om, Ah, Ra, Pa, Tsa, Na, Die."

That's pronounced "Dee," came the voice of the swordfish over the loudspeaker. "If you would like to you may do it this way: repeat the mantra in groups of three or seven times, making the final 'Dhi' of the third or seventh time into many: Om Ah Ra Pa Tsa Na Dhi Dhi Dhi Dhi Dhi Dhi Dhi Dhi," and the voice faded away into silence still repeating the syllable 'Dhi.'

Then Jonah awoke from the dream and wrote down the magic formula so that he would not forget it. He hurried to work so that he could tell Bud the Butcher about the wondrous dream.

"That's fantastic," Bud the Butcher exclaimed, "but I'd sure to know who that swordfish really is. Write down the magic formula for me, and at lunch time I'll go down to the bookstore and maybe I can find out more about it."

During his lunch break, Bud the Butcher went to the bookstore around the corner, and suspecting that the formula might be oriental in origin, began looking through the books on oriental philosophy and religion. He finally came across the formula in a publication called the Crystal Mirror. The formula was that of Manjusri, the personification of wisdom in the Buddhist tradition. Manjusri, explained the article, was pronounced Mon -joo'-shree, and he was depicted as a youthful prince wielding a lightening sharp sword with which he cut through the fictitious belief in the self and the other fictitious

ideas about the world. "The sword in the fish," thought Bud the Butcher. The article further explained that he was to be regarded not as some kind of god standing outside somewhere, but rather as the personification of the primordial intelligence inherent in the nature of existence. Bud the Butcher rushed back to the A&P and told Jonah what he had found out.

"So that's it," said Jonah, "the sword in the fish - the swordfish!" and the two men enjoyed a good laugh together.

Then they returned to work and Jonah repeated mentally the mantra of Manjusri as he worked, glancing over occasionally at the shelves of canned goods which more and more appeared to be a shining expanse of colored light.

It was July of 1978 and one morning Jonah arrived at the A & P bright and early and sat down to read the newspaper before work. He liked to read the Daily News because it had more pictures than the other newspapers. On the back cover he found an unusual picture of millions of penguins on an iceberg. The caption said that a gigantic iceberg, thirty-five times the size of Bermuda had broken off from the Antarctic mainland and was floating northward at a leisurely pace and melting, populated by a large colony of penguins.

"Get a load of this, Bud," said Jonah as Bud the Butcher sat down to join him at the table favored as the employee's coffee break table. "What do you make of that?!"

"How interesting," said Bud the Butcher. Then he reflected for a while and said, "You know, Jonah, the best way to deal with news stories sometimes is to treat them as if they were a dream and analyze them accordingly. This may be an important sign. The penguins are like men in tuxedos. This represents that the formal, rigid ideas we have about man as a self or thing in a spread out world 'out there' as a collection of objects, are beginning to thaw out. The world as dream has its own self-regulating mechanisms to bring things more into flow and when we try to freeze things into a solid world of self-contained objects clashing with each other, the dream has ways of pointing out that things can and need to flow in a smoother fashion. This is such a sign, and we can expect more like it until things are as open-ended as they could be. If we don't heed the signs, we're gonna wipe each other out and the cockroaches will rule the planet!"

"Makes sense to me," said Jonah, who was deeply impressed with the manner in which Bud the Butcher had interpreted the unusual new story. He flipped through the paper until a certain article caught his eye. He read it quickly and said excitedly to Bud the Butcher, "Hey it says here that there's a Tibetan lama coming to New York to speak on Sunday. It says that the man is regarded as an incarnation of Manjusri, the personification of wisdom. I wonder what that means?"

"I don't know," said Bud the Butcher, "but he must be awful smart. Let's go hear him speak."

"Sure," said Jonah.

On Sunday, Jonah and Bud the Butcher went to hear the lama speak in the hall above the Lotus Eaters restaurant across from the Flatiron Building. He was a young man in his thirties with glasses and a long braided ponytail. He seemed to be really enjoying himself and laughed a great deal. He spoke good English and in his speech he emphasized that wisdom doesn't occur in a vacuum and that it was important to cultivate kindness, or knowing how to act appropriately in situations, as being inseparable from wisdom. After his speech, Jonah and Bud the Butcher went up to shake hands with the lama and he said he was glad to meet them. They returned to hear him speak on the following weekends in the hall above the Lotus Eaters restaurant across from the Flatiron Building.

Then on Sunday, August 6th, Bud the Butcher and Jonah went to the flea market. They walked around and saw many things and Bud the Butcher bought a modern found-art sculpture called 'The Growth Chart of Pinocchio' which was next to a standing wooden crucifix with Jesus on it. They were standing in front of a table when two blind-men came along. One of them came up to the table and asked, "Got any chairs?" Bud the Butcher turned to Jonah and said, "You know, Jonah, life is just like that, like blind men at a flea market."

Jonah waited for Bud the Butcher to explain the metaphor but that was all he had to say.

That afternoon, Bud the Butcher went home to spend some time with his wife and son, Junior. Jonah decided to go to the Bleecker where there was a double feature of the Fellini movies, Roma and The Clowns. Roma featured an ecclesiastical fashion show at the Vatican and the people in the audience laughed and laughed. During the intermission between films, Jonah bought some popcorn and then sat down and began to reflect upon the meaning of exit signs and all that he and Bud the Butcher had been discussing since he'd begun working at the A & P. Then The Clowns began, a semi-documentary on the art of the clown in our era, featuring some of the legendary clowns of our time, including the fabulous Fratellini family. All of the clowns had painted faces and Jonah began to think about what Bud the Butcher had been saying about the face as the ultimate boundary and about the fact that no one had ever seen his own eyeballs. He thought and thought about the nature of the face and eyeballs as boundaries and decided that it really was a foolish, if not a dangerous, idea. "We're all like clowns," he thought, "painting our faces to mark off what we believe to be our private territory."

He remembered what Bud the Butcher had said about how meanings spin out through the power of proposition and take on more and more power and solidity." 'This is a thought' says the voice we believe to be located somewhere in 'our heads', 'and I am the thinker,' Bud the Butcher would say. 'That's my nose out there and this is my body.'

Those are things in the distance and I'm seeing them' but all the while it's really just a matter of the chatter trying to create the world, with the imagined sayer and hearer of the chatter as the central character. "In the beginning is the word, but the word isn't with anybody," Bud the Butcher was fond of saying. Then the movie finished and Jonah returned home to Mrs. Pritchard's boarding house.

The next day Jonah went to work as usual and sat down before work to read the paper where he was joined by Bud the Butcher. They looked at the front page and were shocked when they saw the headline. On Sunday, August 6th, at 3:20 eastern standard time, Pope Paul VI had died!

"I was watching Fellini's movie The Clowns when the Pope died," said Jonah. "What were you doing, Bud?"

"Just playing with Junior," said Bud the Butcher. "He liked the Pinocchio sculpture, but my wife thought it was ridiculous. Say, yesterday was August 6th, the anniversary of the dropping of the first Atom-bomb. In fact it was the 33rd anniversary of the dropping of the A-bomb. That is significant. That's an important number in Christianity - Jesus lived for 33 years. It all goes back to what I was saying about the myth of Lucifer. You start thinking there's a 'you on the inside looking at the light on the outside and before you know it you get a guy who still thinks he's looking at his nose trying to lead to salvation 700 million people he thinks are out there somewhere with their noses, but it'll never work."

"You know," he continued, "meanings and propositions have spun out to where they have so much power that there are imaginary 'who's' blowing up what they think is other 'who's in' what they think is the one 'where' out there called 'the world.' Just imagine for a moment that people looked like potatoes and talked the way a record sounds when you turn it from 33 and 1/3 rpm to 78. I mean, whatever reasons they thought they had for blowing up the other potatoes, they'd still look and sound pretty silly! Anyway, it's all connected, and the timing of the Pope's death really is significant. Just pay attention to what events arise together. A pope dying on the 33rd anniversary of the first atom bomb isn't just a chance occurrence, it's meaningful. It's another case of the dream mechanism pointing out that things aren't as open-ended as they could be for what really is a dream."

Jonah was fascinated by Bud the Butcher's explanation and decided that there really might be something to what he had said. He leafed through the newspaper and to his surprise found a photograph of the lama who was regarded as an incarnation of Manjusri. "Hey, it says here that the lama left New York this morning by plane to return to the Tibetan refugee camp in India," said Jonah,

"How about that," said Bud the Butcher. "See, we can clutter up the dream-space with all our confusion and aggression, but there's always the primordial intelligence right there along with it proclaiming that everything is really just a dream, perfect in all dimensions. The airplane's just a flying

metal whale and today the sword of Manjusri is in the fish. Every picture tells a story, don't it? Just pay attention to whatever arises together and you'll get to be a good dream interpreter." Then the two men put on their paper hats and began the day's work.

A new pope was soon elected and he named himself John Paul I. He was a simple man who had once written an imaginary letter to Pinocchio. Everyone was shocked when after only 33 days in office, he was found dead in his bed the morning of September 29th.

Now on the morning that the new pope was found dead, Jonah was in Boston where he had gone to spend a week's vacation on the advice of Bud the Butcher. In the morning he stopped to browse among the local street merchants who were selling their crafts. One woman had taken the lenses of old eyeglasses and pasted different kinds of pictures taken from postcards and other places onto the backs of the lenses, and then painted the backs of the images with gold paint and glued pins onto the backs so that they could be worn. Jonah bought a pin depicting Pinocchio swimming with the fishes and pinned it onto his shirt. "Looks like he's about to get swallowed by the whale," said the woman selling the pins.

"Maybe he's about to get out," answered Jonah. Then Jonah wished the woman "good day" and went on his way. He walked past a news stand and was shocked to learn from the headline that the new pope had died. "And after 33 days!" thought Jonah,

who was astonished by the coincidence of the number 33 in connection with the pope's death.

Jonah walked around Boston considering the meaning of the event. He walked past the cathedral of St. Paul and standing outside the cathedral was a man who appeared to be connected with the church. "Hello," said Jonah.

"Hello," said the man. "I'm Brother Bernard, the sexton of the church, who are you?"

"My name's Jonah," said Jonah.

"Well", said Brother Bernard, "have you been swallowed by any whales lately?" and he began to laugh.

"The whole world's a whale," said Jonah, "and we're inside it or not really inside depending on how you look at it."

"I never thought of it that way," said Brother Bernard.

"I'm very sorry to hear that the pope died," said Jonah.

"Yes, so am I," said Brother Bernard, "but I guess it was just one of those things."

"Yes, I suppose so," said Jonah, although he was thinking that nothing really happened by chance and that the timing of the pope's death must somehow be significant.

"But you know," continued Brother Bernard, "the pope picked a bad day to be found dead. Today is the day of the Feast of St. Michael and it's supposed to be a happy day."

"Who is St. Michael?" asked Jonah.

"St. Michael," said Brother Bernard, "is the angel who cast Lucifer from heaven!"

So the new pope had been found dead after only 33 days in office and on the day of the Feast of St. Michael! Jonah recalled Bud the Butcher's explanation of the myth of Lucifer and suddenly it all made sense. Lucifer had won out over St. Michael and proven that his fall from heaven was not a once and for all state of affairs but rather an ongoing challenge on the part of the primordial intelligence to establish itself in the state of grace before the fall. Once again the self-regulating mechanism of the dream had asserted itself, this time in the symbolic form of the death of God's spokesman on earth, the pope, on the day honoring the angel who had acted on God's behalf to cast out the upstart who insisted on being God's equal. After all, Lucifer just wanted things to be open-ended and on equal footing and if he and God and all the angels were really just imaginary characters in a dream that was inherently without boundary, why should God get to be top banana? If boundary and separation really weren't inherent in existence, it was only fair that all the apparent entities be regarded as equal, thought Jonah.

Jonah looked across the street and was nearly blinded by what he saw. Emblazoned on a large silver truck that had just pulled in was a gigantic swordfish! That signed and sealed it. "The sword really is in the fish," he thought. He realized that he had well come to understand, with an understanding that really belonged to no one, the nature of appearance as a shining expanse of light with no inside or outside, without subject or object, and that Lucifer had in fact never really fallen anywhere - it just seemed that way.

"I really am the swordfish," he thought," and so is Brother Bernard and so is everything else, especially that truck! But Brother Bernard doesn't seem to know it. The difference is that I've finally been spit out by the whale and Brother Bernard and everyone else is still in one. Not that I was ever really in one, ultimately, or even really needed to get out; and not that Brother Bernard and everyone else really needed to get out of anywhere. Still, I get the feeling that he's stuck inside a whale and looking for the exit sign."

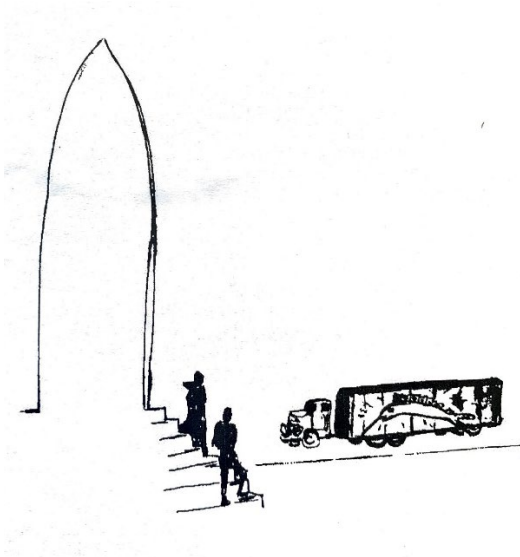
Jonah felt like he would like to share his vision with Brother Bernard, but he didn't know where to begin. He knew that it wouldn't be wise to get excited and assure Brother Bernard that it was really no further to the exit sign than it was to his nose when he was in the movie theater. Everyone was inside a whale and there would be enough time for everything. So he took off his pin depicting Pinocchio swimming with the fishes and gave it to Brother Bernard. Then

he said, "Well, gotta go now." Brother Bernard thanked him and wished him "good day."

Jonah felt as if he had a mission to accomplish, but he wasn't quite sure what it was, or where he should begin, so he finished his vacation and returned to his job at the A&P in New York.

When Jonah told Bud the Butcher about the swordfish truck, Bud the Butcher was as excited as if he had been there in person. "How about that!" said Bud the Butcher, ``a swordfish!"

"Yeah," said Jonah, "a swordfish." Then picking up one of his crullers, he held out his hand to offer it to Bud the Butcher and said, "Every picture tells a story Donut?"



The Dr. Guenther Letters

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26 January 1997

Charlie Singer
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
Dear Mr. Singer,

This is just a short note to thank you for sending me your *Anstman: The No-self Nature*. I enjoyed reading it and brought many memories of the small, but interested group at the Nyingma Institute.

Are you continuing your studies where you are no living? I myself am happily retired from university teaching and therefore have plenty of time to pursue my own interests that still are with Buddhist psychology and its rich imagery.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,


Herbert Guenther
Professor emeritus

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25 June 1997

Dear Mr. Singer,

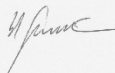
Thank you so much for your kind letter of June 6 and the pamphlet by H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche on Maha Ati.

I am happy to learn that you still continue "searching," which in the rNying-ma and bKa'-brgyud tradition means to look inside and not to chase chimeras outside. After all, these are but projections of one's own mind and have the tendency to lead the searcher farther and farther away from what he looks for and will never find, because, as Klong-chen-pa once said, "that what you search is the searcher himself." In other words, when you introduce a division where there is none, you are already lost. Generally, what a Westerner wants and what he believes to be available in the various Buddhist schools that emphasize experience rather than speculation, is only holistically accessible. In this respect Western phenomenology to the extent that it has remained hermeneutic and not become just another dogma, as well as quantum physics are invaluable. Throughout my life, the original texts, be they in Sanskrit or Tibetan, have been a source of inspiration, if that is the correct word. When I look at the welter of so-called translations, pretending to be objective whilst attempting to conceal the fact that behind any objective "translation" there is always a subject who does the switching (not *translating*, which involves understanding) of words, I am reminded of Saraha's words: "whatever you say is a damned lie." By the way, the complete cycle of Saraha's Dohas has been translated by me from the original Apabhramśa and Tibetan and copiously annotated under the title "Ecstatic Spontaneity."

You ask what I am doing now. Well, more and more I am drawn into an exploration of the symbols through which psychic life expresses itself. After all, we live in a world of images of symbolic pregnance (as pointed out by the late Ernst Cassirer) and not in a world of dead signs to which the empty-minded rationalists want to reduce everything. This leads me to the main question in your letter. Mechanically speaking, the Ekajñi is the fierce form of the gentle Tārā. Functionally speaking, she is related to the Great Mother in all her variations, once a symbol of the whole's creativity (and by virtue of this creativity the feminine aspect of the gylanic whole that we as engendered beings cannot but image as male-female [a good study is the book by June Singer, *The Opposites Within* and the works by Riane Eisler, *The Chalice & the Blade*, and *Sacred Pleasures*]) and now a figure of mythology. In addition, she has "incorporated" many features of the terrifying Hindu goddess Kālī, but her fierceness is not directed against others, but against the demons (the instinctual) in us. To end this letter on a jocular note - be careful when you deal with the Ekajñi.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely



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31 December 1997

Charlie Singer
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Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you so much for your kind card letter and the good wishes you convey to both my wife and myself. Except for the fact that one gets older and physically slower, we cannot otherwise complain too much about our health and our common interests that more and more have music as their center: my wife, an accredited music teacher, playing the piano and the harpsicord and I playing the flute (semi-professionally). Our two daughters and their husbands are university/conservatory music teachers, music editors and performers.

Now to your questions. There is no contradiction between the *bdag-med* and the *bdag-nyid chen-po*. The latter term is an ontological concept referring to the structure of Existenz - a being (if this is the right "philosophical" term as far our language is able to express what is not a thing, neither material nor mental), a being, whose being is a task, is *its own*. This its being its own being presupposes some kind of an I or, in psychological terms, a Self that is something enduring. This I/Self's oneness is neither egocentric nor logocentric, and hence is not identifiable with any one structure; it is a process-structure always open to making possible other structures. It is (again we have to use this fateful static word) a sense of living in which any and all identifications with any structure are subject to deconstruction. The term *bdag-med* means that *there is no self* in the sense of a substance, a fixed identity, and a rigid closure to processes of change.

The many female divinities are not so much independent entities or misplaced and misunderstood psychic realities. Their "existence" presupposes the visionary/visualizing experienter without whose presence and active participation in the process they just would not be. Each such feminine figure is an aspect of the experienter's complex pattern that is always, simplistically stated, a gylanic (a term coined by Riane Eisler in order to overcome the static notion of complementarity and, in view of us being either males or females, the equally static notion of androgyny) reality that for descriptive purposes we cannot but split into an abstract duality. In genuine Buddhist process-oriented thinking (*rdzogs-chen*), not to be confused with the current use of this term by pompous and essentially illiterate Rinpoches and the hordes of their acolytes (who do not know any Tibetan but in their self-importance and mimicry tap up what, on closer inspection, turns out that "master's" or guru's or lama's private fancy), the feminine aspect of the psyche's dynamics is creative, appreciative; the masculine aspect is more supportive. However, no aspect can be without the other, they intertwine. Again, it is the participatory experienter's disposition to emphasize the one or the other aspect. The fierceness of these figures is actually kindness in disguise. There is never any malice or viciousness on their part involved.

With all best wishes from the New Year

Yours sincerely



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June 24, 1998

Charlie Singer
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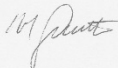
Dear Mr. Singer,

This is a belated saying "thank you" for sending me your little booklet "Empty Blue Planet." A glance into the bibliography made me wonder why you studiously avoided any works by Western authors and relied on late medieval and modern Tibetan authors who mechanically reproduce antiquated translations of technical terms owing to their ignorance of the English language and of what has been done in the field of Western philosophy and transpersonal psychology. I therefore wonder whom you want to address, the serious questioner and thinker or the pious believer.

The two questions you ask I have answered at length in various books and articles written by me. They cannot be answered in a dogmatic, reductionist manner. I regret that I have to disappoint you in this respect.

With all best wishes and kindest regards,

Sincerely,



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October 26, 1998

Dear Mr. Singer,

This is just a short note in response to your kind card-letter. Your understanding of *rig-pa* is correct; it operates beyond the egocentric and egological dualism. So far, Western psychology has no inkling of what is involved since it is still too deeply rooted in the Cartesian dualism. I try to paraphrase, not to reduce it to some reductionist postulate, by describing it as a "supraconscious ecstatic intensity." It must be experienced in its immediacy, every attempt to report on it is already a falsification in spite of the lure it has on those who live by figments of reality rather than by reality.

As to *ngo-bo* / *rang-bzhin* we have to bear in mind that in order to understand what is meant by what is a process, not a juxtaposition of dead entities, we have to heed Gaston Bachelard's (a former scientist turned phenomenologically inspired literary critic) advice that we have to think two contrary notions as a single dynamic one. This is an extremely difficult task, since our egological mind (whatever this word means) is violently opposed to anything that cannot be reduced to some preconceived postulate. The rendering of *ngo-bo* by empty essence is plain nonsense, which has not prevented "emptiness" to become a fetish word among the emptiness-addicts in the Eastcoast from whom the Tibetans lapped up this nonsense because they neglected to study what their own texts had to say. The word *stong-pa* is a verb, not an adjective as is the Sanskrit word *śūnya*. My experience on this continent (including Canada) has been that those who have gone through the Northamerican school system do not even know the difference between a verb and an adjective. And this ignorance is lapped up by the Tibetans who, in their understandable desire to be heard, just repeat the nonsense they are being told by enthusiasts or plain ignoramuses. Moreover, empty/emptiness is a container metaphor, and since the adjective empty is a qualifier of a noun (such as a bottle or a mind), there is no difference between an empty bottle and an empty mind, except for the fact that an empty bottle can be filled, but an empty mind is impervious; nothing ever gets into it. To make matters worse, there are sixteen emptinesses: which of them suits the personal emptiness of the emptiness-addict best and will kill the pain of his nihilism?

In conclusion, I have studied Mi-pham's writings and recent events have made me even more suspicious of the claim that someone is the reincarnation of someone. I have learned about

someone having bought a certificate that he is the clone of
some famous lama and now believes earnestly that he is a
Tulku. Is this another instance of the millennium bug of
insanity? I, for my part, want to have nothing to do with
this or any other commercial deception.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



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November 10, 1999

Charlie Singer
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Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you very much for sending me your latest Cd which I enjoyed very much. I am happy that you are well and that you had the chance of meeting many interesting persons, some of whom I know (or knew) personally

Now to your questions. The word dharmata belongs to the level of representational thinking and its translation by "nature of" is correct. dharma can be understood as "phenomena" or "entities of reality," specifically when used in the standard plural sarve dharma "all the phenomena or entities of reality." A single instance, "wetness is the nature of water."

The "fierce" as well as the "peaceful" deities have nothing to do with what in the epistemological systems is called dharmata. They belong to the level of the "imaginal" (not imaginary) or mythopoieic level and are best described as "(self-)formulations of psychic energy" and as such are forces complementary to each other. They are neither "material" nor "mental." The matter-mind bifurcation is more or less restricted to the Western pre-occupation with matter and the static worldview, an outgrowth of representational thinking. The so-called "deities" are experiential "realities" and hence irreducible to any "thing." Even to speak of "psychic" realities is already unwarranted, but unfortunately our language is very poor in matters of what is not reducible to the banal and quite literally "meaningless."

There is not much to tell. As usual I am busy with the texts that nobody touches, either because for the orthodoxy they are taboo or because the ancient language is no longer understood. Personally speaking, both my wife and myself are in good health, as are our children and grandchildren.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



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January 7, 2000

Charlie Singer
75 E. Dorrance St.
Kingston, PA 18704

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you very much for your kind X-mas and New Year wishes and the unusual image of Padmasambhava. I, too, hope that the New Year will be quieter than the last one.

Now to your questions. Your rendering of gzhon-nu bum-pa'i sku by "youthful flask body" reflects what the contemporary Lamas who, without exception have not the slightest idea of Buddhism as an experience, have told you. The Tibetan term does not refer to a "thing," but is a symbol in the sense of the psyche's self-expression. It is an image experienced as a "pattern" that is already a meaning of which the closest analogy is our "body-as-lived" (sku), not as a dissectable corpse. As such the "body-as-lived" is like a repository of what is deemed to be good and evil, and is imaged as a pitcher or flask or cornucopia (bum-pa). Since what is intimidated by this Tibetan term, is not a thing that is bound to grow old and decay, it is felt as being ever fresh and young (gzhon-nu).

As to the term thig-le nyag-gcig your rendering of it by a "single bindu" again reflects the contemporary Tibetans' ignorance who have a holy terror of their own language and use Sanskrit words which they do not understand and then present them in a translation made by academics and cultists, of a previous century. This technical term cannot be rendered reductively. It refers to a "uniquely significant" (nyag-gcig) experience that is neither a one or a many or a singularity, and your rendering of thig-le by bindu is inadmissible for various reasons. In the original Tibetan texts the Sanskrit word used is tilaka (a dot or focal point on the forehead, because it is impolite to stare into a person's full face). The meaning of bindu is a point-instant. The word thig-le is a descriptive term for process of emergent phase spaces. Broadly speaking, the thig-le nyag-gcig "speaks" - if this is the correct word - of unity-as-ordered-plurality. Maybe in the near future I may bring out a monograph.

a dynamic

experience

With all best wishes

Sincerely

H. Guenther

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August 27, 2000

Charlie Singer
75 East Dorrance St.,
Kingston, PA 18704
U.S.A

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you for your kind card letter. I could not answer earlier because I have been "under the weather" that has been very unstable and this year I felt the instability more than in other years; all my life I have been weather sensitive. Now to your questions:

The phrase *bde-stong dbyer-med* does not occur before Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa (1308-1364) and is frequently used by 'Jam-mgon Mi-pham (1846-1912). *dbyer-med* means "inseparability" and in the above compound describes what the late physicist-turned-phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard had expressed by saying that we have to think two contrary notions (*bde* and *stong*) as a single dynamic one. *bde* describes a "feeling tone," not a feeling judgment. It is therefore a lived-through experience. The Tibetan *stong* has a verbal character so well summed up by A.N.Whitehead (who did not know Tibetan or Sanskrit) in the words "not allowing permanent structures to persist." The "translation" by empty/emptiness is utter nonsense, lapped up by the Tibetans who are blissfully ignorant of anything that is not their own dogmatism and not having studied Western ways of thinking. There is a strange interrelationship between the Tibetans who, when they want to communicate what they know, in English which they do not know and merely regurgitate what they have been told by those who apparently do not know their own language. By this I mean that they do not know that empty/emptiness is a container metaphor. Containers have the habit of falling apart into fragments. Thus here are sixteen emptinesses and, in this age of drug addiction, none of these emptiness pills can kill the excruciating pain of the emptiness addict's emptiness.

As to Shambhala I have certain misgivings. The idea of an utopian land of happiness is wide-spread, its political twist into a universal dictatorship (the ideal of paranoid politicians of every persuasion) is already found in the Hinduist Puranic literature. As to Tibet, it is a relative late-comer and combines different visionary and/or hallucinatory experiences. To my taste the whole business of Shambhala and incarnations is too political and not only too self-contradictory but even contradicts everything Buddhism has or is believed to have taught.

With all my wishes

Sincerely

H. Guenther

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October 30, 2000

Charlie Singer
75 E.Dorrance St.
Kingston, PA 18704
U.A.S

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you so much for your "Five Elements" that arrived today and to which I shall listen tonight, when everything is quiet.

I did not forget about your questions in your last letter. The delay in answering them was due to some disquieting news about the health of my grandson who had to be rushed to hospital for dialysis. But now he is home again and can hook himself up to the machine during nighttime. So you will understand that worries distracted me.

The phrases *snang-stong dbyer-med*, *gsal-stong dbyer-med*, and *rig-stong dybyer-med* refer to subtle nuances in the evolution of Being (Being-gua-being, wholeness) or by whichever name we may refer to *gzhi* that, though the "ground" and even "reason for," is in Padmasambhava's words, "a ground-that-is-not" (*gzhi-med*) or in Jakob Böhme's words, an *Ungrund*. It never is an "empty container." Rather, it is (if we can say anything about it) pure potential whose dynamic manifests itself in its lighting-up (*snang*). The *dbyer-med* emphasizes the fact that these two contrary notions (the no-thing, nothing, *stong*) and the lighting-up (*snang*) must be "seen," that is, experienced as a single dynamic notion. And while the *snang* describes the process of the whole's coming-to-presence (which we more or less immediately interpret or misinterpret as our phenomenal world (*srid*), in Whitehead's words "a misplaced concreteness") the *gsal* describes this lighting-up's radiance (otherwise we would live in a pretty dark world). Again, *gsal-stong* must be seen as a single dynamic notion. The same applies to *rig-stong*. The word *rig-(pa)* describes wholeness as being "intelligent" though not in an egological sense. The idea that the universe might be alive and intelligent in its own right, sits not well with our materialistic worldview that has difficulty with whatever cannot be reduced to some lifeless thing. Since we talk a lot about consciousness that is always understood in terms of an ego or "I" or some hazy self, I paraphrase *rig-pa* by "supraconscious ecstatic

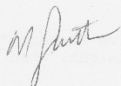
intensity," Sometimes I even use ek-static in the attempt to avoid any association with what is popularly called ecstasu.

The word rig-pa is also used in the so-called gsar-ma tradition where it has lost much of its experiential connotation.

I hope these remarks will satisfy yor curiosity. What will Become of the world when there are no curious minds?

Once again thanking you for yourkind gift,

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'M. J. ...' or similar, written in dark ink.

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September 21, 2002

Charlie Singer
75 E Dorrance St.
Kingston, PA 18704-4703

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you very much for your kind letter and the beautiful Kurukulle card. Also many thanks for inquiring about my wife's and my own health. On the whole, considering the fact that one gets older and physically less agile, we should not complain, though of late I have been troubled a bit by the vagaries of the weather which here resulted in a drought that made the prices for basic foodstuff skyrocket.

Now to your questions. There are two terms for the Sanskrit word *dharmadhātu* in Tibetan: *chos-kyi kham* and *chos-kyi dbyings*. Since everything has to be "Sanskrit" even if the Tibetans don't know Sanskrit and like Namkhai Norbu invent fancy words, I have long given up reading what they say. Your informant is correct in stating that *stong* and *gsal* go together. In Tibetan both terms have a verbal character and must be thought together as a single dynamic notion. In their commonly repeated misconception of them as adjectives and static notions they are mistranslated as "empty" and "brilliant." Now, "empty/emptiness" is a container metaphor: there are empty bottles and (since nouns stand for things) there are empty minds of the which the emptiness-addicts make a fetish and elevate their emptymindedness into a metaphysical principle. That's why I make fun of these people, be they naturally stupid or imitation-wise stupid. The unity of *stong-gsal* is such that *stong* describes a "voiding" in the Whiteheadian sense of "not allowing permanent structures to persist" and *gsal* describes a "radiating/illuminating" such that the "voiding" is the "illuminating." If it is already difficult to comprehend two contrary notions as a single dynamic one, this difficulty is enhanced by the com-presence of a third factor, inseparable from and irreducible to either. This factor is referred to as *rig-pa* that has nothing to do with any ego-centric and/or ego-logical reductionism. Thus *stong-gsal-rig-pa* form, descriptively speaking, a unitrinity. If you try to pinpoint it as something (some thing) and "meditate" on it you have already lost what you want to meditate on.

Now to Kurukulle. First, she is not a *ḍākinī*, *ḍākinīs* belong to a different level of the psychophysical organization constituting a live person. The Kurukulle is an intrapsychic

self-presentation (not re-presentation) of what for want of a better term we call the psyche. The manner in which this self-presentation occurs depends on the experiencer's total make-up that is not a thing, but a process subject to internal fluctuations. This accounts for our "formulating" this presence in humanly intellible images that may be "fierce" (but never vicious) in order to warn the experiencer, the so-called practitioner, to "watch out" (since you enter uncharted territories), or "peaceful" to encourage you to "go on." After all, it is always your way and nobody but yourself can go your way.

Fall is finally here, frost is predicted. The worst for me is that the days get shorter and shorter.

Now I hope that you are in good health (the supreme gain, as already stated in the Pali Canon) and continue being so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'M. J. G.' or similar, written in a cursive style.

Herbert Guenther, Ph.D., D.Litt.
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April 25, 2003

Charlie Singer
75 E. Dorrance Street
Kingston, Pa 18704
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Singer,

Many thanks for your kind letter-card of 4-8-03. As to your first question. It is unfortunate that the Tibetans use Sanskrit words which they do not understand (and maybe not even their own language). In the Sanskrit word *vajra* means a diamond, indestructible, but able to cut everything. The Tibetan word *rdo-rje* means lord of the mineral world and by implication a diamond. The Sanskrit word *sattva* means a being or something existing. The Tibetan word *sems-dpa'* means someone who has the courage (*dpa'*) to raise his mentation (*sems*) to the level of wakefulness (in Sanskrit *bodhi*, and in Tibetan *byang-chub*, compound meaning perspicacity (*byang*) and consummation (*chub*) in the sense that consummation means what we would describe as "things falling into a pattern that is indestructible and spiritually alright. There could not be a greater difference between *Vajrasattva* (a static concept) and *rDo-rje-sems-dpa'* (a dynamic concept).

The second question, to the best of my knowledge, has nothing to do with a cult of women (*stripija*) as some feminist conceive 'left/feminine' in the sense of what A.N.Whitehead has called "misplaced concreteness." (In their eagerness to be "modern," Indians and other non-Western people have failed to see or comprehend the principle of complementarity, in which the one cannot be without the other and both give meaning to the one the other). On the basis of this principle pervasive of *rDzogs-chen* thinking, "right" is associated with action in the sense of efficacy (that may turn into mere blundering) and "left" is associated with discerning appreciation (that may turn into dogmatic opinionatedness). In no way can this principle of complementarity converted into a dominance psychology so prevalent in political circles (East and West). With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



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September 10, 2003

Charlie Singer
75 E Dorrane St.
Kingston, Pa 18704

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you very much for your kind letter that arrived while I was a bit under this ever-changing letter.

Now to your questions. The *rig-pa'i rtsal dbang* is an experiential term and its meaning is make a person stand on his/her own feet (*dbang*) and only mediately means something like an "initiation" because it is performed within a certain circle of aspirants. (Personally I do not like the term aspirant, "disciple" would be more appropriate). Its attribute *rig-pa'i rtsal* means the "inner dynamic" of an ecstatic (ecstatic) intensity, or "excitability/excitation." *rig-pa* "excitability/excitation" contrasts with *ma-rig-pa* "a person's unexcitability/unexcitedness" whose run-of-the-mill translation as "ignorance" (Skt. *avidyā*) is quite wrong. A person afflicted with "ignorance" need not be "stupid," he just cannot get excited about (interested in) anything.

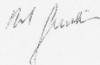
By the way, I never met the Sakya Trizin when I was in India or on this continent.

Concerning the Takkiraja he is one of the *chos-skyong* (Skt. *dharmapāla*). The word Takki seems to be local term, it certainly has no Sanskrit equivalent. Many of the so-called Tantras originated in non-Sanskrit speaking communities. The Tibetan transliteration of the Sanskrit word *rāja* is *radza*. The "three worlds" refer to the "world of desires," the "world of aesthetic forms," and the "world of no-forms."

Finally, if it is not too troublesome for you I would be very happy if you could send me a couple of postcards of the peaceful and fierce deities. Occasionally you had sent me such postcards with your greetings, but I might need them in the not too distant future.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



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September 29, 2003

Charlie Singer
75 E. Dorrance St.
Kingston, Pa 18704
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you so much for sending me a selection of Tibetan deities. It always strikes me how once fierce people, feared by their neighbors, could paint such lovely figures. Actually, what we tend to call "deities" are self-presentations of one's rich inner life that is both gentle and fierce, and it is through them that we can grow into our humanity. As you will have noticed the faces of the male deities are round and likened to the sun, those of the female deities are oval and likened to waxing and waning moon. Their in-depth meaning is that the (male) sun (the archetypal Father yab) symbolizes *thabs* the efficiency principle, and the (female) moon (the archetypal Mother yum) symbolizes *shes-rab* the critical acumen, such that the one cannot be without the other. Prosaically speaking, "She" comes up with ever fresh ideas whose actualization depends on "Him." In Hinduistic Tantras Śiva without his śakti is a *śava* (corpse). Concerning the fierce deities you will notice that their action is never vicious. Again prosaically speaking, if you persist in your preconceived notions and do not act circumspectively, you better watch out.

I have never seen the book *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism* (Snow Lion Publication). The samples you sent me, look intriguing. There is one good bookseller here and I shall try to order it through him.

Here it is cold, the mornings the temperature is about freezing point and during the day it is about 10 Or 12 degrees plus (Celsius). Overnight the leaves have turned yellow and red and the birds gather for their flight to the south.

Once again thank you for sending me such lovely postcards. I hope that you are (and stay) in good health.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely,



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October 19, 2003

Dear Mr. Singer,

Thank you very much for your informative letter that arrived a few days ago. While our University Bookstore unlike other universities charges the full price even to faculty member, there is here one excellent bookseller, very competent in ordering books from anywhere, where I get a discount that in view of books getting ever more expensive while the purchasing power of the dollar gets poorer and poorer, is a very important factor when one has to live, like me who has retired from the university, on a pension. I checked with him and found out that the price of the "Deities of Tibetan Buddhism" is just too much, more than 250 dollars. This is too much for a private person.

I am quite conversant with the sNying-t(h)ig ya-bzhi, a collection of smaller works by Klong-chen rab-'byams-pa. They reveal his encyclopedic knowledge, in one sense, very scholastic, in another sense revealing the fact that he speaks from experience that deepens so more one ponders over what must be known before speaking of and about it. Since he lost his library on his return from his exile due to a misunderstanding between him and the Tai Situ, he wrote from memory. I could even find out that he quotes a passage from a text which is not in that text, but in another one. While for the Vedic literature we have concordances and other useful works, in the field of Tibetan studies, nothing of this sort exists and the various Rinpoches do nothing simply because there is no money in it for them.

You ask about the difference between Mahamudra and rDzogs-chen. This, as you have noted, is a complex and complicated subject. It involves two different perspectives. Broadly speaking, the one is structure-oriented, the other process-oriented. Mahamudra is listed sequentially as the last stage of four stages: Karmamudra, Dharmamudra, Samayamudra, Mahamudra. However, experientially speaking, the Samayamudra comes first as one's being committed to the pursuance of one's (spiritual) growth and/or maturation against the background of the Mahamudra in the sense, as expressed by Martin Heidegger, that "all beings are marked by Being." Karmamudra and Dharmamudra are the "external" and "internal" aspects of this growth process. rDzogs-chen, as the chen implies, goes one step further. The decisive term is the la-zla-ba, literally meaning "crossing a mountain pass," figuratively or psychologically meaning "crossing the last,

barrier" with the emphasis on the "crossing." Here language plays a trick on us in making us believe that by crossing we enter another dimension that is as restrictive as the ones we have left behind. As the rDzogs-chen texts make it abundantly clear, a process has neither a beginning nor an end, neither a center nor a periphery. In other words, the going is the Way, but if you do not watch out, you may go astray into any attractive and pervasive form of insanity, a (religious) cult-leader or a (political) big-mouth.

You ask about the "V." that I sometime used as a middle name (a concession to the Anglo-American environment). Steve Goodman, a highly intelligent person whose weakness is his being a town-crier and his proclivity to an imitation mannerism, apparently failed to tell you that I used it as a kind of joking at myself. The Sanskrit word Vighnantaka means "someone who overcomes obstacles." Those who know me also know that I do not give up before I have solved a problem specifically in the realm of my research, the rNying-ma texts where the available dictionaries fail and which the Tibetans do not study (because studying is hard work). I have lost contact with Steve Goodman and I am not keen on re-establishing one. You probably know Kennard Lipman, years ago a co-student with Steve Goodman. He is now an ultra-orthodox rabbi and viciously opposed to Buddhism (according to latest reports).

I think I have answered your questions to the best of my ability and it is about time to go back to work in this karmabhumi (the level (bhumi) on which we have to work (karma) out our potential).

Here we have plenty of sunshine and it is getting colder. A few snow flurries gave us notice that winter is approaching. Since I have been weather-sensitive since childhood and since the extreme fluctuations do me no good, I stay inside and drown myself in my books (not in alcohol as some in my age do) and try to overcome the difficulties they like to create.

With best wishes,



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March 28, 2004

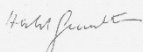
Charlie Singer
75 E. Dorrance St,
Kingston, PA 18704
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Singer,

The last few weeks I have been under the weather and, as one grows older, the body cannot so quickly adjust to the constant, almost daily, changes. This is the reason that I did not respond to your two letters and tapes immediately. I must admit that the so-called translations by the Lama/Rinpoches do not impress me. The sNyung-tig ya-bzhi by Klong-chen-rab-'byams-pa is an encyclopedic "Readers Digest" presupposing a knowledge of his mdzod-bdun. It was for purely political reasons that everything Tibetan had to be Indian in origin (whatever "India" may have meant for them). When the so-called "religious kings" had squandered the money on futile military expeditions (see Beckwith, *The Tibetan Empire in Central Asia*) and in addition had to cope with the powerful Bön ideas, the ever-present Chinese (in and East of Tibet) and the advancing Muslims (from the West, Middle Near East (Transoxania) and the Iranian plateau), they became ever more withdrawn and quarreled among themselves. Each faction had its own "catechism" to which it stubbornly clung as being "Indian" at the expense of not studying what went on outside their, in modern diction, autism.

Neither the *khregs-chod* nor the *thod-rgal* is "Indian". The *khregs-chod* goes back to the Chinese Srisimha (dPal seng-ge, the Hva-shang Mahayana (Buddhist Daoist), seng is the Chinese transliteration of Sanskrit *sangha* and means the Venerable (dPal) monk. *khregs-chod* is not something that can be objectified and turned into some meditative fixation. It is an experiential term that, as far as we can say anything about it, describes how it feels when all obstacles (intellectual, emotional, and so on) have been cut through and one has become the life stream itself. Similarly, the *thod-rgal* also is not something objectifiable and fixable. It describes a "jumping" (not "gliding") ahead (from one rock in a river to the next one) until one becomes "grown up," "mature." There exists a vast amount of literary works, though mostly repetitive, that the modern Tibetan dogmatics do not read or know that it exists.

With all best wishes,
Sincerely,



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November 28, 2004

Charlie Singer
75 E. Dorrance St.
Kingston, PA 18704
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Dear Mr. Singer,

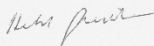
Thank you very much for your kind letter and the enclosed booklet. Actually you seem to ask two questions. The one concerns the term *kun-tu mkhyen-pa* (the spelling you write reflects the typical Tibetan phobia of correctly transliterating their own words.. *kun-tu* means "all" in a holistic sense, and differs from *thams-cad*, also meaning "all" in a distributive, itemizing sense. *mkhyen-(pa)* means "sensitive" in being considerate of whatever appears ("lights-up") in its field of awareness.

The second question concerns the term *rang-rig*. Its Sanskrit equivalent is *svasamvitti*, a term the rDzogs-chen thinkers took over from the Brahmanical Mimamsa system. The term *rang* means "self" in a reflexive sense, not depending on something other than itself. *rang-rig* is an experiential term, not an epistemological one, hence its frequent "translation" by "self-knowledge" is quite misleading. The term *rig-pa* must be seen in relation to the term *ma-rig-pa* which does not mean "ignorance," the *ma* is a negation meaning "not-quite," a strict negation ("not existing at all") is expressed by the term *med-(pa)*. *rig-pa* means "excitability/excitation" and as such characterizes any living system, hence *ma-rig-pa* means "not quite excitable" and characterizes the large mass of ordinary people who are content with their dullness and stupidity (Tib. *gti-mug*, Skt. *moha*).

Here it is very cold fluctuatingly. Since I have been wheather-sensitive since childhood, this yo-yo play by nature is not very conducive to my health.

I hope you are in good health and enjoy the coming holidays. With all best wishes for the coming New Year.

Yours sincerely,



APPENDIX:

3 Tibetan Prayers



མཐོག་མེད་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ལྟེན་
 བྱུང་བའི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་
 ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་
 ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་ལྟེན་

You are the primordial awareness of skilful means—the indestructible state beyond all concepts, | Realized in the nature of the Great Mother, transcendental wisdom free from any reference, | Displaying your compassion, in all its variety, in every kind of way— | O Great Vajrasattva, to you I pay homage!

om vajrasattva āḥ

The 100-syllable Mantra of Vajrasattva

ཨོྃ་ བཌྲ་སྡེ་ས་མ་ཡ།	om
མ་རྩ་སྡེ་ས་མ་མཌྲ་སྡེ།	Om, the most excellent exclamation of praise,
ཏེན་པ་ཏིནྲ་ཏིནྲ་མེ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	vajrasattva samayaṃ
ལུ་རྩ་ཏིནྲ་མེ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Vajrasattva's samayaḥ
ལུ་པོ་ཏིནྲ་མེ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	anupālaya vajrasattva
མ་རྩ་ཏིནྲ་མེ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	O Vajrasattva, protect the samaya
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	tvenopatiṣṭha dṛḍho me bhava
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	May you remain firm in me
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	sutoḥyo me bhava
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Grant me complete satisfaction
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	supoḥyo me bhava
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Grow within me (increase the positive within me)
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	anurakto me bhava
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Be loving towards me
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	sarvasiddhiṃ me prayaccha
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Grant me all the siddhis
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	sarvakarmasu ca me
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Show me all the karmas (activities)
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	cittam śreyah kuru
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Make my mind good, virtuous and auspicious
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	hūṃ
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	The heart essence, seed syllable of Vajrasattva
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	ha ha ha ha
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Symbolizes four immeasurables, four empowerments,
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	four joys, and four kayas
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	hoh
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	The exclamation of joy at this accomplishment:
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	bhagavan sarvatathāgata
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	O blessed one, who embodies all the vajra tathāgatas
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	vajra mā me muñca
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Do not abandon me
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	vajri bhava
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Grant me the realization of the vajra nature
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	mahāsamayasattva
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	O great Samayasattva
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	āḥ
ལ་ས་མི་རྩི་མེ་མེ་ཡ་མེ་ཨོྃ།	Make me one with you

Tibetan calligraphy by Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche

There is no greater practice than Vajrasattva for healing illness, for purifying harmful karma, for dissolving obscurations, for enhancing the long lives of the masters, for repairing impairments of vows and pledges, for attaining longevity, for accumulating merit, for helping those who have died and for offering when spiritual teachers have passed away.

Vajrasattva himself promised in *The Tantra of Immaculate Confession*:

The hundred syllable mantra is the quintessence of the mind of all the sugatas. It purifies all violations, all breaches, all conceptual obscurations. It is the supreme confession, and to recite it one hundred and eight times without interruption repairs all violations and breaches, and will save you from tumbling into the three lower realms. The buddhas of past, present and future will look on the practitioners who recite it as a daily practice as their most excellent children, even in this very lifetime, and will watch over and protect them. At their death, they will undoubtedly become the finest of all the buddhas' heirs.

ནམ་མཁའི་མཐར་ཐུག་མཐར་ཡི་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས།

Nam kay tar tug ta yay sem chan nam

May all beings, whose number is as infinite as the sky,

མ་འབད་པའིན་རྩ་སྐྱ་གསུམ་མཛོན་གྱུར་ཏེ།

Ma bad shin du ku sum ngon gyur te

Realize the Three Bodies of a Buddha.

པ་མ་འགྲོ་བྱུག་སེམས་ཅན་མ་ལུས་པ།

Pa ma dro drug sem chan ma lu pa

May my parents who are all the sentient beings of the

Six realms of rebirth without exception,

ཅུམ་ཅིག་གཏོང་མའི་ས་ལ་སྤྱིན་པར་ཤོག།

Cham chig dod may sa la chin par shog

Come together in the Primordial Original State

(which is enlightenment itself).

(a Tibetan prayer)



The Tibetan letter AH, symbol of the apparitional nature of appearance

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